

Independent Review Panel - Financial Support for Members

IRP - 19

Response from Jones, David

Dear Mr. Reading,

I had prepared a detailed response to the request for comments on AM s salaries etc.

However my IT skills are limited and my typing speeds even more so, I therefore prefer not to spend an hour + on preparing some thing which due to my IT inadequacies will disappear into the ether!!(as happened to my 1st. email)

1] In my previous email I attempted to argue that as most AM's are selected in the first instance by their party, responsibility for the payment of their office/constituency /travel /subsistence expenses should rest with the Party. Each Party would receive an allocation from the Assembly based on the rurality of each AM's patch and distance from Cardiff .Any savings they made could be vired into their election fund.

2] AMs and MP's should only be reimbursed for standard class travel because it would allow the man in the street to lobby them on long journeys. They justify First class travel because it allows them to work read-mere mortals (not allowed first class travel) attending important meetings in Cardiff also require reading time. The savings made through travelling on saver standard tickets is substantial.

3] **Those** AM's who need to stay in Cardiff during the week should be provided with a one bedroom flat by a Housing Association. If these flats were to be located in a mixed housing development they could be used as short term move on accommodation for homeless / single parent families if not required by AM's.

4] AM's are employed on Short Term contracts .It would be interesting if a Think Tank could be contracted to deliberate on the relative advantages/disadvantages to the state of all politicians being directly employed by their Political Party. The employer would performance manage the AM and the result of their annual appraisal could be shared amongst party members

I share Sir Rogers anxiety to ensure that AM's provide value for money. We must expect that their time in Senedd allows them to give due consideration to their legislative role, in particular their scrutiny function. Some seem to think that their role is akin to that of a County Councillor.

- Do they receive induction training when they enter the Senedd??
- How is the attendance record of AM's recorded and disseminated publically?
- Is the political year in Wales as long as that in Westminster?

To reiterate my prime question- If AM's become employees of their Political Party, would the dual accountability that followed be advantageous to the State? If not why not!

David Jones

PS Should Sir Roger wish to join us for coffee when he is in Corwen we would be delighted to oblige?